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The Guitar in Argentina

Of all the countries in Latin America, Argentina is perhaps the most developed as concerns the guitar. By the mid 19th century numerous European guitarists had arrived in Buenos Aires and Montevideo, bringing with them the schools of Carulli, Aguado and Sor.

The fusion of folkloric musical forms with European classic guitar techniques gave birth during the 19th century to the *guitarra criolla* ('creole guitar') in the Rio de la Plata region. Some of the composer/guitarists from this era were Juan Alais (1844-1914) and Gaspar Sagreras (1838-1901). The first Argentine classical guitarist to achieve genuine international recognition is María Luisa Anido (b. 1907).

The Argentine creole guitar reached its full maturity in the 1940's with the appearance of folkloric virtuosi Atahualpa Yupanqui (1907-1992) and Eduardo Falú (b. 1923). Other guitarist/singers of this ilk were Chango Rodriguez and Jorge Cafrune. So great is the number of guitarists from Argentina that we are limited to mentioning only a few of the most prominent, which must include Abel Fleury (1903-1968), Jorge Morel (b. 1931) and Cacho Tirao (b. 1941). Today a new generation of guitarists trained in conservatories has achieved formidable international success, and includes Jorge Cardoso, Roberto Aussel, Miguel Girollet, Jorge Labanca, Eduardo Isaac and Máximo Pujol.

Argentine Music

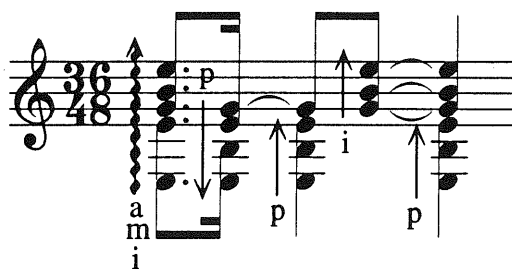
Argentine folklore is extremely rich and includes over 50 dances as well as numerous song forms. We will focus on three of the most popular rhythms: the *zamba*, the *malambo*, and the *carnavalito*.

Zamba

This dance is probably the most popular in Argentine folk music. It is in 3/4 with a bit of 6/8 mixed in. The basic pulse of the *zamba* is this:

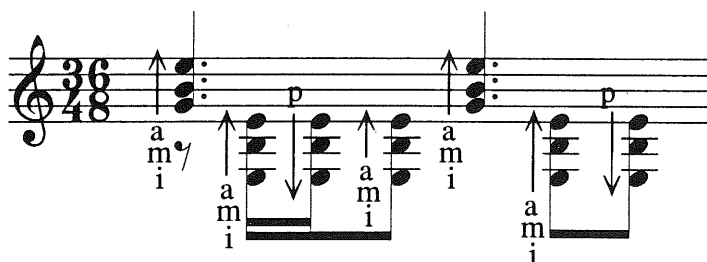


On the guitar this rhythm is played thusly:

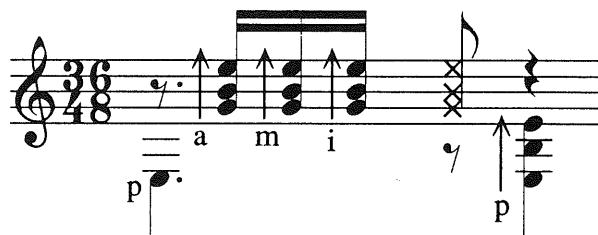


This rhythm originated in colonial Peru where it was known by the beginning of the 19th century as *zamacueca*. From there it spread southward, spawning not only the *zamba* in Argentina but also the *cueca* in Chile and the *marinera* in Peru. Here are the basic rasgueados of the *cueca* and the *marinera*:

Cueca

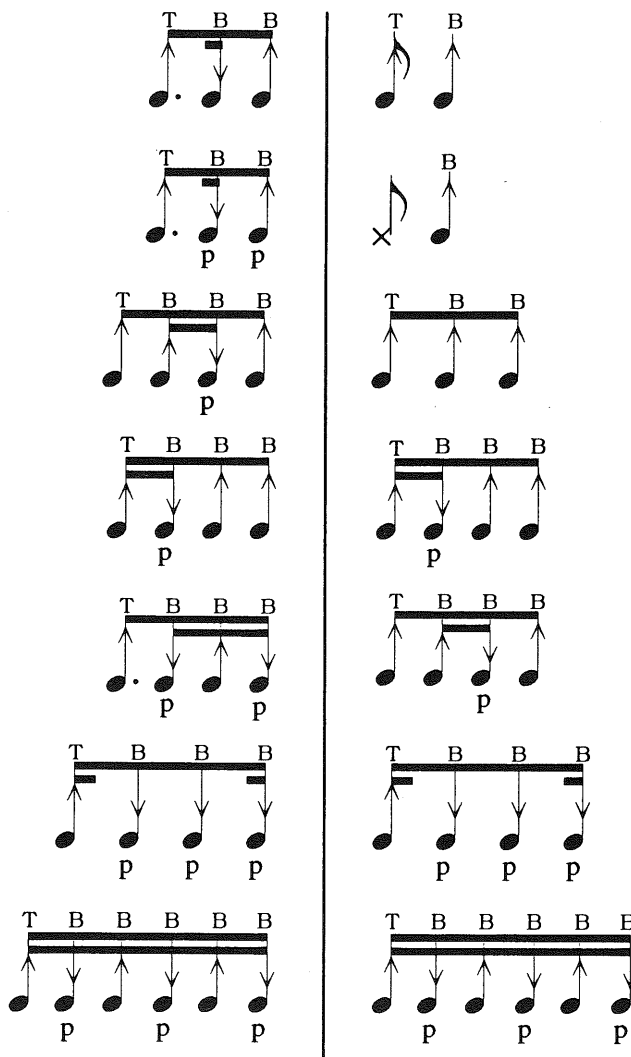


Marinera



These basic rhythms are just part of the the story for there should come into play variations for contrast. Below is the basic rhythm of the *zamba* with six variations. As shown, this rhythm can be divided in halves and the guitarist may freely mix any and all of these ideas when improvising.

Zamba Rasgueado Variations



(From Cardoso: *Ritmos y Formas Musicales*)

Plucked Rhythmic Patterns

Milonga $\frac{2}{4}$

a m i a m i a a m i a m i a

Samba $\frac{4}{4}$

Joropo $\frac{36}{48}$

i a i a i a i a

Merengue $\frac{5}{8}$

a m i a m i a m i a m i a